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KNOWLEDGE OF MAN AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION.

By Dr. RUDOLF STEINER.

From a lecture dated February 6th, 1920. *)

Let me show you through an example. — indeed, many examples might be mentioned — how the centuries as they pass by bring delusion. You know that many years ago when anthroposophical spiritual science began to take on its present form, a number of people who came in touch with what I could offer, particularly upon the foundation of this anthroposophical spiritual science, came along and said: "We too, would rather immerse ourselves in the mysticism of Meister Eckhardt or of Johannes Tauler. It is so much simpler; we are able to say in such a nice and comfortable way: I sink into my inner being. My higher Ego has grasped the divine human essence within me."

But this is merely a refined form of egoism, indeed nothing else than a withdrawing into one's own egoistic personality, a running away from humanity as a whole; it is an inner self-deception! When in the 14th and 15th century it began to be impossible for men to understand the human being comprehensively, it was clear that men such as Tauler and Meister Eckhardt HAD to come, for they were able to draw attention to man's inner being, in order to find the real human being. But to-day — to-day this time is past; to-day this immersion into our inner being is useless. What matters most to-day, is to understand rightly one of the sayings of Christ — and this is the example I meant — to understand one of the most important and significant sayings of Christ, namely: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I, in their midst." That means, that Christ is NOT there, if we are alone. WE CANNOT FIND CHRIST UNLESS WE FEEL UNITED WITH THE WHOLE OF HUMANITY. Christ must be sought to-day along the path trodden by the whole of mankind. In other words: Inner self-satisfaction leads us away from the Christ Impulse.

*) From stenographic notes, unrevised by the lecturer.

That is particularly the misfortune that befell the protestant theology of the 19th century, when the impulse arose of being content with a mere individual-egoistic inner experience of Christ. There is a crowned head in Europe, one of the few heads that still wears a crown, who always replied, whenever it was a question of coming into touch with a spiritual knowledge in keeping with the times: "I have my personal Christ-experience." He felt satisfied. Many people say this. And it is the misfortune of the present time that men will not take this universal interest in an impersonal human element. For we only learn to know ourselves if we know the human being as such. We cannot gain a true knowledge of man, unless we seek his origin in conditions that lie outside the earth.

Bear in mind how, according to my "Occult Science", the origin of what constitutes man to-day is sought for in conditions outside the earth. This "Occult Science" is so unpopular only because it rejects every confused form of knowledge concerning humanity, and because the origin of man as such is led back to the whole universe, particularly to the universe outside the earth. This is needed at the present time. The present must make up its mind to add to all those sources of knowledge which are so popular to-day, the other sources, the spiritual sources of knowledge.

Here lies the kernel of the matter, and whether it is a consequence of guilt or of ignorance, for both terms can be applied, words do not matter -- here we have what our scientific school must say of those who are the leading men when the question arises as to what a man can or cannot know; or of what is given out to the world by our European and American universities regarding man, regarding the so-called wisdom of man, but also regarding social, technical and other kinds of knowledge. The world accepted this and omitted all those factors that encompass the human being as a matter of course.

Those who now seek to obtain any leading position, even even though it may not be a very high one, have no opportunity of learning what might enable them to obtain a knowledge of man. And without a knowledge of man, social life cannot exist; without a knowledge of man, there can be no renewal of Christianity. To-day one can be a theologian, without having an inkling of the meaning of the Mystery of Golgotha, for most theologians have no idea of the true nature of Christ. And to-day it is possible to be a lawyer, without the slightest knowledge of the true being of man. One can become a doctor to-day, without having an idea of how man's being was built out of the cosmos and of how the sound human body is related to the diseased body. To-day one can be a technician, without knowing in the least what influence the structure of some machine may have on the whole course of the earth's development, and one can be the clever inventor of a telephone to-day, without even knowing the significance of the telephone for the whole evolution of the earth.

Men are to-day unable to survey the course of human development. Every human being thus feels the need of forming a little

circle and of following a routine within this little circle, of using this routine to bring himself forward, thus satisfying his own egoism, without considering how that which he thus adds to the world as a part, fits into the whole of the world.

If we were to build houses to-day with the same methods with which we build up our existences, these houses would immediately collapse. If we were to make bricks to-day with the same methods with the same methods with which we educate our theologians, lawyers, medical men, etc., and philosophers in particular, and if we were to build houses with the bricks, these houses would not be able to exist even one week in the world. In the greater world-conditions, men do not notice how things collapse and crumble away. Ever since the last third of the 19th century, there are continual collapses; things are continually crumbling away. But men do not perceive it; on the contrary, they speak of the great revival, and even to-day some speak of building up a new world with bricks that have long ago become useless. A new world can only be constructed if a completely new spiritual impulse enters the whole civilised world. Without this spiritual impulse, we may patch things up, but we cannot call them into life.

You see, there are men, well-meaning people, who are mortally afraid of such an intensity of knowledge as is striven after by spiritual science. They are afraid of it for a certain reason - now I am not inventing things, but I am telling you facts - and they would like to say: "How boring, if we were to know all that spiritual science pretends to know about man, for then we could no longer hope for new knowledge in the future" "A fearful prospect for the future", they add, "if we already know everything!"

I do not wish to say that this is a comfortable excuse made by those who are too lazy to approach knowledge, but I should like to point out clearly that as soon as we have that insight into the human being which spiritual science enables us to have, it is possible to think of a social reconstruction. We cannot begin with a social reconstruction. BEFORE WE BRING INTO ORDER, AS IT WERE, OUR KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING MANKIND.

From: "MYSTICISM AT THE BEGINNING OF MODERN SPIRITUAL LIFE"
 ("DIE MYSTIK IM AUFGANGE DES NEUZEITLICHEN GEISTESLEBENS")

"Whatever stage man may have reached, there are still higher outlooks, still loftier possibilities. He may have a clear and definite knowledge of the direction which he must follow, but just as clearly and surely will he know that he can never speak of a final goal. A new goal is but the beginning of a new path. It is not possible to KNOW the final goal, it is only possible to TRUST in the path and in the course of development. "

THE EXPECTANT MOOD IN LIFE.

Lecture by Dr. RUDOLF STEINER, delivered at
Stuttgart on the 26th of April, 1918. *)

(CONTINUATION)

If we have a true understanding of spiritual science, we cannot say that it is abstract and that it does not penetrate into practical life. Indeed, when spiritual science is more and more understood, it will enter right into practical life, for it will even penetrate into our concrete feelings, and as a result, we shall grow up in a different way and look forward differently to what every new year of our life can bring us. In spiritual science we find the most active educational forms, the strongest pedagogic impulses. The moral impulses of spiritual science have an entirely different influence upon the human soul than those moral impulses on which men to-day so pride themselves, for there are impulses in spiritual science that stream into the human soul out of the fullness of life, out of the universal meaning of life.

Of course, by that I do not mean that every ideal must immediately be realised by everyone with any knowledge of spiritual science. But generally speaking, we find that a moral impulse first lives above us as an ideal and we ourselves must then incorporate it through an impulse of our own free will. Spiritual science indeed contains these significant moral impulses. It does not only cultivate a morality pertaining to the earth, but a universal morality. These things must be correspondingly perceived and understood.

But what is greatly needed above everything else, is that such a frame of mind as explained to you just now should find admittance into men's hearts and souls. The fatal catastrophe of our present time has been brought about just because we live in a transitional age, that seeks to pour new forces into the human soul, and men have not yet lost their attachment to old traditions and are unwilling to accept these new ideas and feelings, and more particularly in their educational principles are they reluctant to do so.

In our outer life, which is the result of materialistic culture, we find the very opposite of what the future so strongly demands of humanity. To-day it is more than ever necessary that men in their development - and in this connection we are all still undeveloped, for we have taken in spiritual science so little, that we must each one of us first become permeated with what spiritual science can give the human soul in the form of education - therefore is it necessary that we should clearly see the meaning of this life's development and that these views should be embodied in our pedagogical principles. For we must do away with the belief that we have finished our education at twenty or twentyfive years, that we have completed our development and that we, as men, can then simply go ahead; at the best, we try to discover some meaning in life by applying what we have learned, or by enjoying life and all it can give us.

But if we look more deeply into the connections of life, this that has been said will stand before our soul in a very, very profound way. What I mean is something that in ancient times developed of its own accord within the human being, something that must now develop in man's feelings through education, namely: A LIFE FILLED WITH EXPECTATION. How very significant it is, if at the age of thirty we can say to ourselves: Secrets will be revealed to me in future simply through the fact that I have grown five or ten years older. I have something to look forward to!"

Imagine what it means and what it implies, when we introduce this mood in education. But it is something very real. It is a flowing life that asserts itself within man and that asserted itself of its own accord in ancient times; now however it must be cultivated. For what thus arises in man, IS THERE, it actually exists, and it does not cease to exist through the fact that we take no notice of it. Do not think that as you grow old you can escape growing wiser and that secrets, even if you take no notice of them, are not revealed to you. You all become filled with the spirit. The only different is that one absorbs it willingly, whereas another, who is convinced that he is a clever man already at twenty (to-day this is particularly the case among the so-called "intelligentsia") refuses to take in new impulses in his education after that age. To-day even the youngest write articles and poems and anything else as well. But what are their feelings towards all these things! How little feeling they have for the true sense of life, which appears when human development comes to the fore as a creation of the spirit! But the spirit is unyielding, and even though the youngest to-day may write plays and reviews, etc., it is nevertheless possible for them to have the spirit, though they have no knowledge at all of that spirit which develops within them.

THE DANGERS ARISING FROM SPIRIT DISPERSED OR STEMMED.

What happens to the spirit, to the real spirit, that developed from itself in ancient times? - That spirit must disperse. Indeed, it becomes rarefied. It spreads out in the spiritual atmosphere, it spreads out in the aura of humanity. Something must be said over and over again in our present time, although people do not believe it, for the simple reason that they think it is pure fantasy if they are told: Here is a young writer of feuilletons, who thinks that he is very clever He knows nothing of the spirit. Yet the spirit passing over into the aura of humanity has become dispersed. The spirit is there, in spite of everything. To-day the aura of humanity is completely impregnated with this rarefied spirit. This spirit must once more be held together by human beings, through that mood of which I have spoken. For to-day we are close to the point at which a terrible evil would necessarily arise, if this dispersed spirit were to go on and on in its development. For it is an important law of spiritual life that when a spirit abandons its bearer it becomes something quite different from what it was originally.

Please grasp this carefully: A spirit that abandons its bearer, a spirit that becomes dispersed, develops into something that is quite different from what it would be if it were kept together by its bearer. It becomes essentially deteriorated, it grows evil; it undergoes an ahrimanic transformation. And the inevitable result, which is not clearly apparent to-day, for we are still at the beginning of a development that might follow a terrible course if we take no notice of it, the inevitable result is a terrible spiritual desolation.

Men will seek for something that keeps them occupied, because they have allowed the spirit to disperse, the spirit that should really have kept them occupied. A search for something in which the seeker does not know what he is looking for, must take on greater and greater proportions, unless the evil is not checked. The first symptoms may already be seen to-day. These symptoms are evident in many things which I have already mentioned.

What do we do when we omit to take note of the spirit? We SEARCH for something but this search takes on a curious aspect, in the most varied spheres. One usual way is the founding of associations, associations with good programmes. All sorts of things are required by these people, which may be very clever, nevertheless they are generally things arising from the fact that men have remained at the level of childhood; an idea from childhood days becomes hardened and we let it loose in the world when we are older, we let it loose in the form of programmes of associations. In these spheres, men are tremendously active and capable. Yet they know very little of how to be really active in the spirit; they do not know how to set out from the small seed of a spiritual activity, allowing human beings to join it of their own accord, and then to maintain active and alive what thus constitutes a society of men.

You see, this is the cause of the many conflicts which remain latent for reasons that I will not explain now; this is the true cause of the many conflicts in our Society. Where I can in any way bring an impulse, there I would like to keep as far away as possible every statute, rule or law. For in the end, why are statutes needed, when a number of men unite for the cultivation of spiritual life? - Statutes may be set up in order to show them to the authorities; but this is a different matter, it has nothing to do with the thing in itself: for the chief point to be considered is what these statutes mean to us. And here the essential thing is that such a society should LIVE, that every new man that joins it is able to bring something new into it such a community must be ALIVE; it cannot immobilize itself through any sort of statutes, for after it has existed five years, it must have changed in the same way in which a child of seven has changed when it is twelve.

This is, however, not the manner of thinking of the present time. According to the present-day mentality we should live as

long as possible without any life; we should rope in everything, if possible, with abstractions.

That is one thing. Many examples could be given, all rising out of the fact that men are not conscious of the dispersing life of the spirit. They seek and seek, in every possible way! Just think how many women's associations and other associations there are to-day in any fairly large-sized town! People seek and seek, because they do not know that they should hold together what is being dispersed consequently they seek, because they do not possess the spirit, because they pay no heed to it. But this search implies a desolation of life. This life-desolation would take on terrible dimensions if humanity fails to grasp the necessity of that mood of life which I have already described to you.

Is it not so, dear friends, that to-day people do not wish to grasp LIFE AS SUCH, LIFE IN ITS IMMEDIATE FORM? - The principle according to which everything that exists has been created by the living spirit, undoubtedly calls for a mobile way of experiencing things. In a certain sense it is uncomfortable to say that one is never "finished", never fully developed. Yet, if the spiritual development of mankind is to progress, this is a necessity. And the task of those who really dedicate themselves to spiritual science is to grasp spiritual science in such a way that it stimulates life and really penetrates into what is required at the present moment of human evolution. The task of those who really dedicate themselves to spiritual science is to share in the life of humanity, and to know what mankind must pass through in the course of evolution, to know what it is DESTINED to pass through.

Try to gain an unprejudiced view of the events that are now taking place round about you. In reality, most people sleep away the events of the present. They only think that conditions resembling those before 1914 must return again, and they wait for the return of these conditions. They do not grasp at all how deeply incisive are the things that should really be borne in mind, and how necessary it is that humanity should work its way through to completely new ideas, that did not exist before. To understand life, also in its historical course, this is above all the task of a spiritual-scientific direction of thinking.

This is one thing: The spirit becomes dispersed, rarefied, if we do not take note of it, as is so frequently the case with the men of to-day. Yet only one part of the spirit dissipates; the other part remains behind: it becomes stemmed in the human organism. It is held back, dammed back, but it does not rise up in our consciousness. It impregnates the organism in an unconscious way. It passes over into the blood, the flesh, and is active in our unconscious depths. So that one part of that of which we should be conscious in the course of our life becomes dispersed, and the other part is driven down into our unconscious depths. And what does the spirit do in these unconscious depths?

(TO BE CONTINUED)

POETRY AND THE SHAPING OF LIFE. *)

By ALBERT STEFFEN.

The Christmas festival once enabled man to look back upon a human race that was not as yet physically hardened. The child - he could feel this - is born out of the warmth of heaven. The child still bears within it this heavenly warmth, this primordial seed of the earth, which only condensed itself little by little, through the world-epochs, into airy, liquid and solid substance.

The Easter festival, revealing its true meaning in the Holy Supper, once enabled man to look out into the cosmos, where his soul-spiritual being lives after death, and where it continues to develop in accordance with his path in life. On the early Christian paintings, the twelve Disciples, whose characters differed so much, still bore upon them the signs of the Zodiac, as a symbol of this truth. The Risen One was looked upon as the Divine Shepherd.

Birth indicated the human being that still contained the universe; death, the universe to which man was to return.

Birth was like a question; death like an answer. Yet this question and answer were different in the case of every single human being. For none had the same destiny. The only one who could find the solution for every human being was the Logos, who encompassed the world's origin and man's perfection, the Alpha and the Omega, the God who had become man.

Natural science that had become agnostic, and theology that had become estranged to Nature, opened the abyss dividing this world from the world beyond. Both lost the spirit: science lost it in the world, and theology in man. They both tore down the bridges behind them.

Although the poet remained a bridge-builder, he built his bridges in a particular way, so that only in single cases they could lead across. And even then, they were not stable. For so long as he builds in an unconscious way, his bridges will be more or less justified: speaking in images, they ~~walk~~ barely touch the other end, so that they immediately collapse, or they are bridges in which the material has been misused and the level lowered, rainbow bridges, paths across clouds, heavy constructions of concrete. The IMAGE of the bridge rises up in our fantasy. And this image passes through every nation.

Particularly at Christmas time these bridges rise and fall, and upon them stand their guardians and beings of this world and of the world beyond. Think of the Gjallar-bridge, on which Olaf Asteson encounters the Spirit-Serpent, the Spirit-Hound, and the Spirit-Steer, feeling the taste of earth in his mouth, like the dead in their graves, until he finally looks upon God's High Mother, who shows him the Last Judgment in Brokswalin

*)After a lecture delivered at the Christmas Conference.